

Starting Early: Addressing the Achievement and Opportunity Gaps in Cambridge

Recommendations of the Cambridge Early Childhood Task Force

Cambridge City Council/ School Committee Roundtable

November 16, 2015

Task Force Charge

- Develop a set of recommendations to improve early education and care throughout the community, and
- Ensure that all children receive high quality early education and care beginning with prenatal care and extending through third grade.



Why this
is important
for the
Cambridge Public
Schools



Task Force Needs Assessment

- Reviewed research on national and state models of effective practice
- Surveyed early education and care providers in Cambridge
- Conducted focus groups with a broad range of stakeholders including practitioners and parents



Cambridge Community Input

Surveyed

68 early education and care providers

10 early childhood service providers organizations representing 41 programs

Conducted 11 focus groups representing

parents

teachers

community based pre-schools

family child care providers

family liaisons

principals

literacy ambassadors

0-8 Council





Task Force Findings

Task Force Findings

Access to Information

“It takes a while to get plugged in and know about everything that exists. You have to be aggressive to find out what exists.” —Cambridge Parent

Maintaining and Improving Quality

“Quality varies from program to program.” —Cambridge Family Childcare Provider

Task Force Findings

Aligning and Coordinating Services

“We need to learn more about what early childhood providers do, and they need to learn more about what we do.” —Cambridge Public School Elementary School Principal

Addressing Critical Gaps

“It appears as though many of the children are coming to us needing greater support than we can sometimes accommodate.” —Cambridge Preschool Teacher

Affordability and Access

“Waiting lists and costs are barriers.” —Cambridge Engagement Team Outreach Worker

Task Force Priorities



Task Force Priorities

- Start Early
- Quality is Essential
- Build a Coherent Mixed-Delivery System



Goal 1



Access to & Affordability of High Quality
Early Education and Care Services

Access to & Affordability of High Quality Early Education & Care Services

- Early Childhood Information
- Home Visiting
- Early Childhood Services and Quality Education
 - Birth to age 3
 - 3 & 4 year olds



Cambridge 3- and 4-year Olds

Improving Affordability and Quality

- Additional scholarship subsidies
- Feasibility of separating all Junior K and Kindergarten classes
- Pilot Program



Goal 2

Program Quality



Program Quality

- Build capacity to improve program quality
Create positions of Early Childhood Director and Program Quality Specialist
- Develop Quality Improvement Plan
- Improve transitions, collaboration & coordination



Goal 3

Build Family Engagement and
Support Partnerships



Build Family Engagement & Support Partnerships

- Promote best practices in family engagement, building on current efforts
- Increase opportunities for family support and learning



Goal 4

Improve Access to Quality
Healthcare Services



Improve Access to Quality Healthcare Services

- Collaborate on improving health outcomes guided by the Cambridge Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)
- Expand access to quality mental and behavioral health services

Improve Access to Quality Healthcare Services

- Enhance pre-natal and home visiting services
- Ensure access to information on healthy development for families and providers



Goal 5

Develop a shared governance
and leadership infrastructure



Develop a shared governance and leadership infrastructure

- Establish Early Childhood Governance Board
- Create positions of Early Childhood Director and Program Quality Specialist
- Develop strategic plan with targeted outcomes
- Strengthen public awareness



Budget



Budget

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
TOTAL	\$190K	\$1.3M	\$2.3M
GOAL I: Affordability	\$50K	\$725K	\$1.6M
GOAL II: Program Quality	\$90K	\$390K	\$490K
GOAL III: Family Engagement		\$65K	\$150K
GOAL IV: Health Care		\$50K	\$100K
GOAL V: Governance	\$50K	\$20K	\$20K

Summary of Goals and Objectives



Guiding Principals				
Whole Child	Build On Strengths		Cultural Competence	
Age Range	Equity and Preparation Gap		Families as Partners & Parent Choice	
		All, Some, Few		
Goals				
GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4	GOAL 5
Increase Access to and Affordability of Early Learning and Care Services	Continuously Improve Program Quality for Birth through Third Grade Services	Build Partnerships to Promote Strong Family Engagement and Support	Coordinate with Healthcare Providers to Ensure Access to Quality Healthcare Services	Develop an Effective Birth through Third Grade Governance and Leadership Structure
Objectives				
1.1 Home Visiting	2.1 City-wide Program Quality Capacity	3.1 Best Practices in Family Engagement	4.1 Collaboration on Improving Health Outcomes	5.1 Shared Governance and Leadership
1.2 Early Childhood Service and Education from Birth to Age 3	2.2 City-wide Quality Improvement Plan	3.2 Family Participation and Advocacy	4.2 Access to Quality Mental and Behavioral Health Services	5.2 Strategic Plan and Plan Management
1.3 Early Childhood Services and Quality Education for 3- and 4-Year Olds	2.3 Pilot Project Lessons Learned	3.3 Family Support and Learning	4.3 Birth and Home Visiting Services	5.3 Accountability: Evaluation, Data Systems and Reporting
1.4 Early Childhood Information	2.4 Transitions, Collaboration and Coordination	3.4 Family Access to Information	4.4 Nutrition and Active Living	5.4 Public Awareness and Practitioner Understanding
	2.5 Provider Access to Information for Families		4.5 Access to Information on Healthy Development	